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L.B.J.'s Talent Scout Needs a Computer and a 15-Hour Day

EXTENSION OF REMARKS

OF

HON. CHARLES P. FARNSLEY

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, August 19, 1965

Mr. FARNSLEY. Mr. Speaker, at the same time that President Johnson through his Great Society has called for renewed dedication to quality in American private life, he has demanded excellence in public service as well.

The kind of man he has chosen to conduct his talent search and the techniques he uses graphically demonstrate the President's awareness that his appointees are an index to the caliber of his administration. That the President is determined to find the best man for each job is clear from this AP story on the talent scout, John Macy, which appeared in the Louisville Courier-Journal of August 15. With unanimous consent I place it in the Record at this point.

[From the Courier-Journal, Louisville, Ky., Aug. 15, 1965]

L.B.J.'s Talent Scout Needs a Computer and a 15-Hour Day

(By Frances Lowine)

WASHINGTON.—Whoever scouted the President's talent scout—John W. Macy, Jr.—found a man with a special skill for finding others.

"Between Macy, President Johnson and Vice President Humphrey, they know everyone of any consequence all over the country," an aid says.

Macy, with the help of a computer and "a network of contacts," tries to keep L.B.J. supplied with just right candidates for presidential posts.

He draws on computer punchcard records of over 20,000 prospective nominees and sources across the country in industries, labor unions, and private organizations.

A very personable personnel man, Macy works doggedly 14 to 15 hours a day, with as much zest as the President, at his dual job as Chairman of the Civil Service Commission and as Johnson's talent scout.

Macy says the talent scouting is just a natural extension of his role as head of the CSC and its 2.5 million Government employees. And he spends about a third of his time at it.

TO HIM IT'S RECREATION

All in all, Macy finds his job so stimulating "I can't imagine a recreation I'd enjoy more."

A dossier on Macy, like the ones he supplies daily to the President, might go like this:

A Democrat, with over 20 years' experience in Government personnel, from post office to Pentagon.

Handsome, youthful (48), tall (6 feet 1 inch), prematurely gray hair (crewcut), full of vitality. Described by those who know him as "sharp as a tack" and with a "memory like his computer."

Extremely well liked, an expert public speaker (on or off the cuff), married (1944), four children (age 3 to 13). Episcopalian, he finds time to attend a weekly religious class; devoted tennis player; expert on baseball (but he's lucky if he gets to one ball game a year now).

His wife (the former Joyce Hagen, of Rochester, N.Y.), a Smith College graduate who met him while working as a wartime research analyst for Army Intelligence, says: "John can't waste a minute. He's never doing nothing."

Those who deal with Macy might keep in mind her insider's tip: "When he's mad—he just doesn't talk."

Commuting between his fifth-floor office suite in the new Civil Service Building to the executive offices near the White House, Macy uses a Government car. He'd like to walk the few blocks, but it takes too long.

MANY JOBS OPEN

Macy's main goal these days is to get caught up with the seemingly endless number of job vacancies for Presidential appointees.

Every week, Macy pulls from an electronic computer the scorecard for L.B.J. on appointments and vacancies. By mid-July, Johnson had named 320 men and women to top-salaried jobs in his administration. But almost every day, a new high-level post becomes vacant.

To help fill these key spots, Macy sends daily memos to the President, usually half a dozen names or more for each.

He says Johnson, keenly aware that his appointees reflect the caliber of his administration, takes care and devotes much time to them.

The President reviews Macy's memos in his night reading, acts on them with remarkable speed, "usually coming back the next day with his appraisal," Macy notes. Sometimes the President rejects the whole batch; asks for more suggestions; seeks advice from Cabinet, close friends. He frequently calls for personal interviews and full FBI reports. He has read some FBI reports that run 100 pages.

Looking for a new Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, where the boss needs plenty of managerial skill, Johnson read a book which detailed the role of Vice Adm. William F. Raborn in developing the Navy's Polaris missile system.

It came as a surprise, like so many of his recent appointments, when Johnson called Admiral Raborn out of retirement to head the CIA.

NO "CONDITIONS" SET

Macy says "politics as usual" is not a consideration in finding the best men. The search is taken without preconditions, Macy says, adding that the approach in each case must be different as the jobs differ.

Macy and his helpers prepare a profile of each job and the requirements for it before they begin the search for who can best fill those requirements.

Macy has work in civil-service executive posts under three Presidents—Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson—pushing for better pay so the Government can compete with private industry for the Nation's best talent.

He says Johnson, with 34 years' experience, "characterizes himself as a career man in Government" and more than his two predecessors tries to elevate men and women from the ranks of Federal service.

Macy says he is often told that some prospect "would be great but you'll never get him."

"I don't let that deter me," he adds.

He finds most turndowns come for financial reasons, because key men in private enterprise often can't afford to take the pay cut a Government post might entail. Macy has been using appointments to advisory groups and committees to get the services of experts, hoping they'll catch Potomac fever and accept a full-time Washington job later.

AN AMBITION REALIZED

Macy himself is a shining example of a Government career success story. He says

his job now "is fulfillment of my aspirations of 20 years ago" and he gets the greatest fun out of the close, informal association with the President of the United States and "being directly involved with the formulation of personnel policies for the Government."

One Sunday, taking his wife and children to church, Macy heard someone calling him as he drove on a downtown street. It turned out to be the President, in his limousine nearby, impulsively asking his talent scout to come around to the White House for lunch.

"The children were amazed," Macy recalls.

In 1958, Macy, then Executive Director of the Civil Service Commission, decided to take a breather from 20 years of Government life, which had included administrative-personnel work in the Social Security Bureau, at Los Alamos with the Atomic Energy Commission, and in the War Department. He says he found the Eisenhower administration not quite so receptive to his ideas for higher civil service salaries, greater flexibility in the examining process, and recognition of employee unions.

He had gone back as executive vice president to his alma mater, Wesleyan University (class of 1938) in Middletown, Conn., where he had majored in government and won a Phi Beta Kappa key.

KENNEDY NAMED HIM

He really didn't like the slow pace of college life, and eagerly accepted when newly elected President John F. Kennedy, looking for a career man for the job, called Macy back in 1961 to head the CSC. Macy thought his friend and neighbor Ted Sorenson, a Presidential adviser, had suggested him, but found that six others had brought his name to Kennedy.

L.B.J. stopped Macy at a cocktail party to tell him to come in and talk about the role of talent scout. He gave Macy that job right after the 1964 election because he wanted advice from someone with professional background who knew Federal Government and the civil service.

Macy admires Johnson from working with him on the President's Committee on Equal Opportunity, set up by Kennedy in 1961 to halt racial discrimination in Federal hiring. It made progress, Macy says, "largely because of his (Johnson's) strong commitment to it."

Macy also shares Johnson's desire to boost women in government from their joint efforts on the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women under Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt.

"Every day he (L.B.J.) says 'Let's find some feminine candidates,'" Macy says.

But Macy has his troubles coming up with them. His 20,000 punchcard dossiers include about one-fourth women. But when the cards are run through the computer to match qualifications and experience with a profile of the job to be filled, Macy reports the women fall far short most often on public service experience.